

Media: Clay

Dimensions: 66cmx 38cmx

18.5cm

A Beautiful Death

A Beautiful Death, was inspired by the devastating coral bleaching occurring on the Great Barrier Reef. Bleaching has detrimental effects on marine life, as it plays an integral role within the marine ecosystem. It is a form of shelter, protection and a food source to many animals and creatures that live within it.

I was driven to make a point of how humans have influenced the bleaching of coral. It is caused by rising ocean temperatures as a result of global warming, pollution and chemical run off into the ocean. I want the audience to be confronted by raising awareness of this issue and hope people will consider their actions as a result.



The composition of my piece was something I tossed and turned over, I was considering making a sculpture of a coral reef but a swimsuit seemed more creative, captivating and significant. The torso shape represents humans co-existing with the reef, whilst showing what is being lost and the effects that we are having on the marine ecosystem. The idea of the swimwear reinforced my point, as I have seen the Great Barrier Reef. The thought of myself, tourists or future generations not being able to view and experience the beauty of the reef is of real concern to me as this is a World Heritage Site.

The artist, Courtney Mattison was a major influence in the production and planning process. The progression of the bleaching coral displays the current situation of the coral reefs. The media and construction of the coral pieces was something that I further experimented with as an effective way of presenting the coral structure. Refining my composition, I began to see a strong connection with human organs, and the feeling we experience when our own internal environment is not functioning at its optimum which parallels how the marine animals respond to their eroding environment. Frida Kahlo is an artist I explored later in my planning. Her body braces and corsets she wore to mend her broken body, in particular her painting, *The Broken Column* - 1944, reinforced the meaning of my artwork, as the braces supported her internal environment the same as the reef supports the creatures of the sea.

The process of creating this sculpture and its installation was challenging and it took many twists and turns before arriving at the final product. Clay was chosen as I thought it was the easiest media to achieve realism and the desired effect of showing the individual coral pieces and their characteristics. I explored various paint finishes and many colour schemes before choosing white matte spray paint to highlight the bleached coral and enhance the projection of my video. I made the video at an aquarium to recreate the underwater atmosphere and amplify the meaning and experience for the viewer. In years to come, aquariums may be the only place future generations can appreciate many of these exotic marine creatures and the precious and fragile ecosystem they need to survive.